

TURN YOUR RESEARCH INTO A SPELLBINDING STORY

IAGLR 50TH ANNUAL CONFERENCE ON GREAT LAKES RESEARCH

UNIVERSITY PARK, PA



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Outreach is increasingly important for researchers

- **A frequent component of RFPs**
- **Leveraging funding**
- **Media interviews**
- **Student presentations and career counseling**

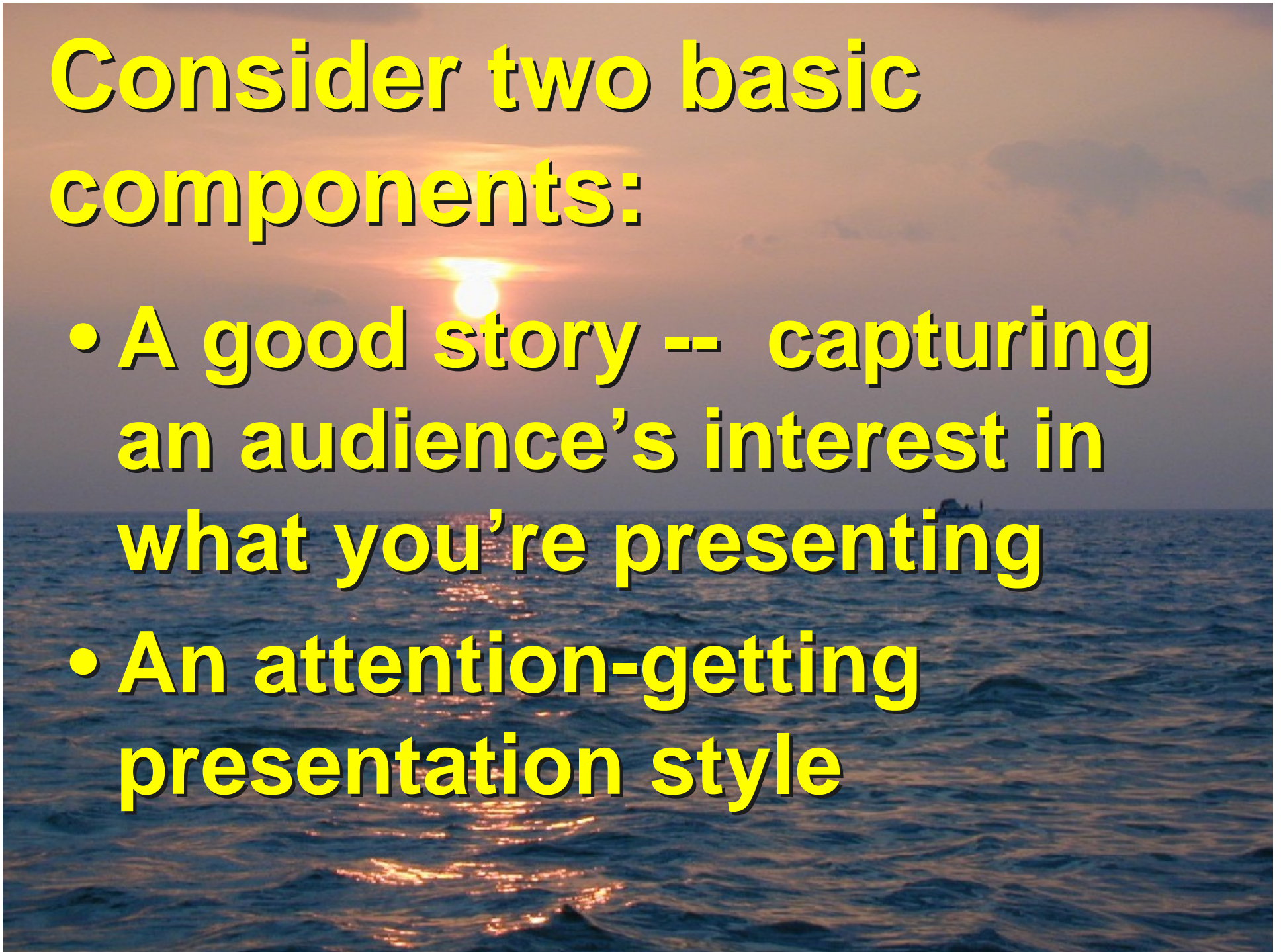
A photograph of a sunset over the ocean. The sun is a bright, glowing orb on the horizon, casting a long, shimmering path of light across the dark blue water. The sky is a mix of soft orange, pink, and purple hues. The water has small, dark waves with highlights from the setting sun.

Non-technical audiences often struggle to comprehend technical presentations

Your message can come across best as an interesting story rather than as a scientific presentation

Consider two basic components:

- **A good story -- capturing an audience's interest in what you're presenting**
- **An attention-getting presentation style**



First ---

- Know your topic intimately
- Are you at ease with every element of your topic?
- Can you boil down the important elements into a few short sentences?
- And make it understandable to a ten year-old?

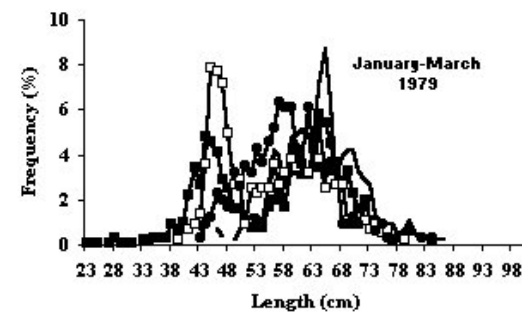
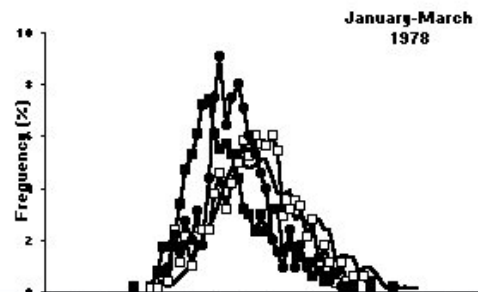
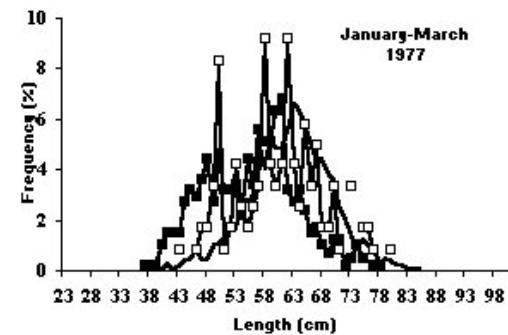
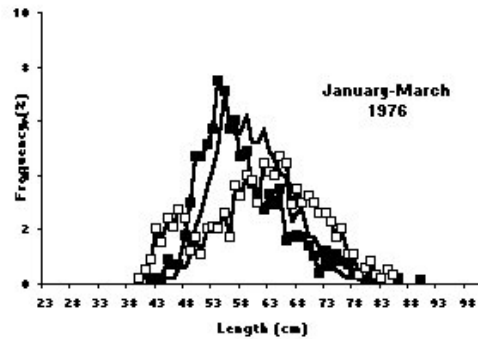
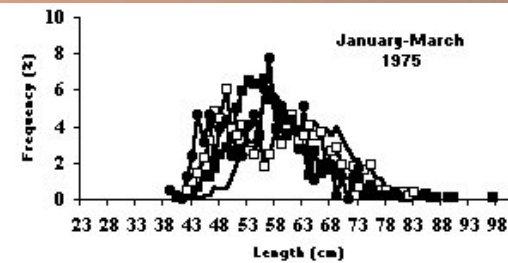
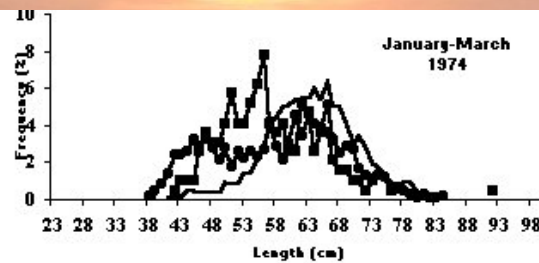
Telling your story

- What is the “big message,” the most important thing you found and want to communicate?
- Identify this early – as a teaser or headline that precedes the body of your talk

Telling your story

- Minimize detailed methodology and statistical presentations of results for lay audiences.
- Which will hold a lay audience's attention?

This?



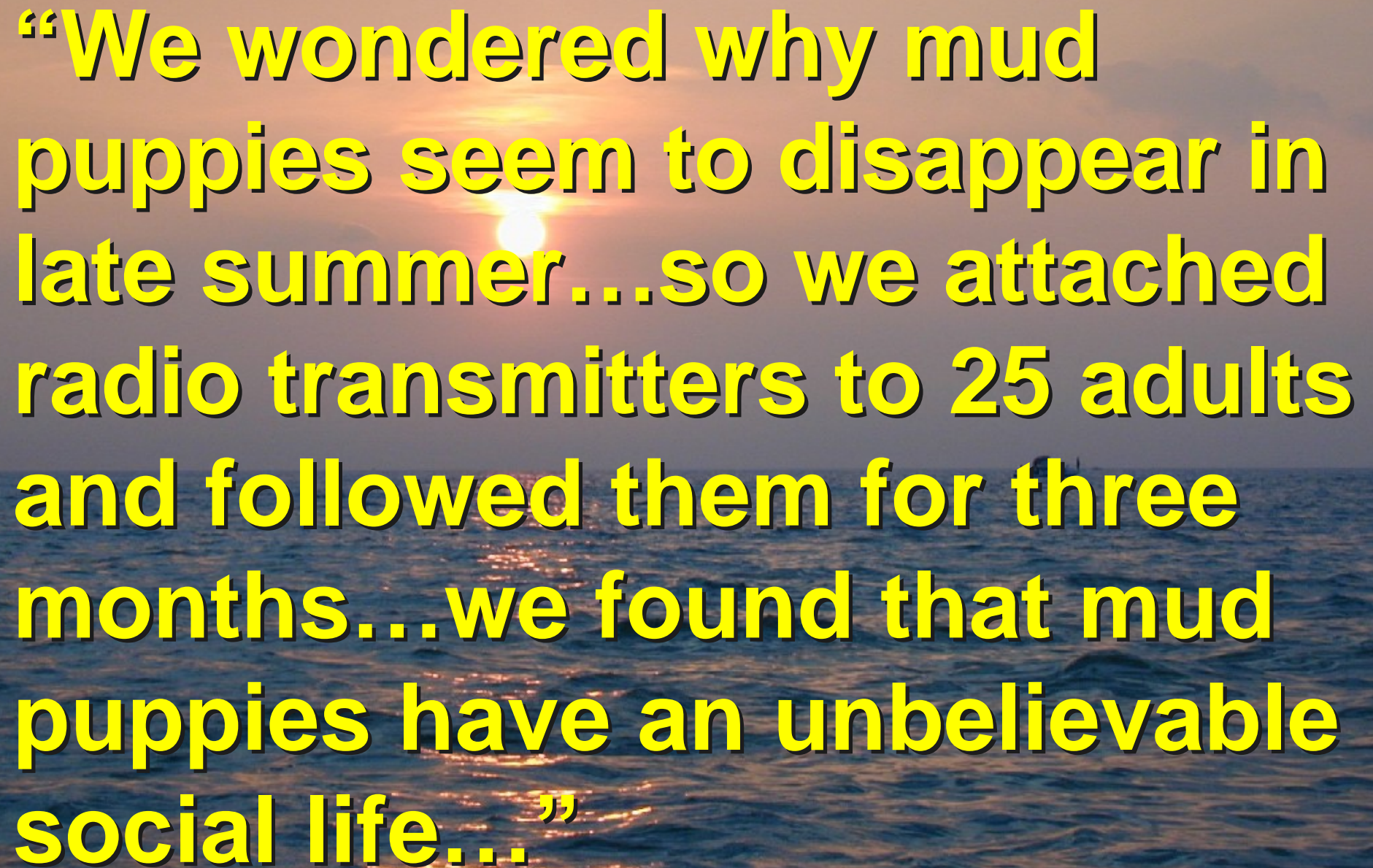
Or this?

“Late spring
concentrates many
of the largest walleye
taken each year into
popular fishing
areas, resulting in
spectacular
catches...”



Focus your presentation on:

- **The nature of the problem or question...**
- **What I did...**
- **What I found...**
- **Why it's important...**
- **i.e., the impact of your work**



“We wondered why mud puppies seem to disappear in late summer...so we attached radio transmitters to 25 adults and followed them for three months...we found that mud puppies have an unbelievable social life...”

The presentation

- **Avoid technical jargon**
- **Can you explain your project to a seventh grader and grab her interest? Use the same approach with adults.**

The presentation

- Use active rather than passive voice
- Choose “action” verbs...
- “the altered seeds were seen to yield a statistically significant increase in biomass...”
or --

The presentation

“...Plants from the altered seeds rapidly dwarfed the normal plants, suggesting much larger crops from the same plots of land.”

The presentation

- Be excited about your work
- Vary your vocal pitch
- Engage your audience with movements, eye contact, humor
- Use anecdotes and examples to illustrate

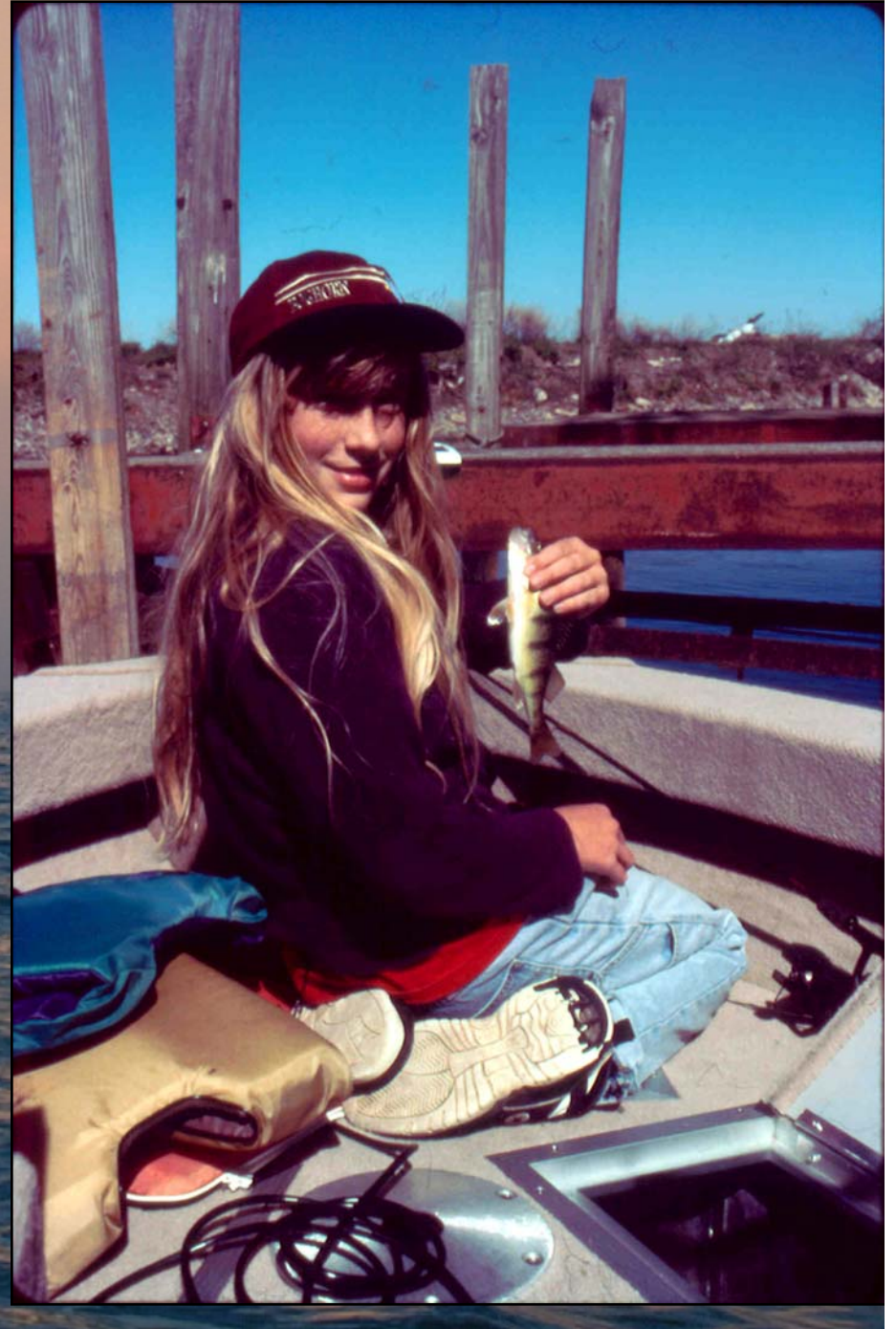
The slides

- Use large (40+), easy to read fonts
- High contrast with background
- Use shadow highlights for easier readability

H H

The slides

- Use photos and illustrations wherever possible to add emphasis



The slides

Use animation to hold interest, but don't overdo it.

Animation should not be the memorable item from your slide

**If they put on their
headphones and drift into
music, you'll know you've lost
them...**



The background of the slide is a photograph of a sunset over the ocean. The sun is a bright, glowing orb in the center of the frame, partially obscured by a thin layer of clouds. Its light reflects off the water's surface, creating a shimmering path of gold and orange. The sky is a mix of soft pinks, oranges, and blues. The ocean is a deep blue with gentle waves. In the distance, a small, dark silhouette of a boat is visible on the horizon to the right.

The presentation

Be enthusiastic...

Be succinct...

**Be in control of and at ease
with your topic...**

**You'll have their rapt
attention!**

Questions?

